

Build or Not Update **Fellowship Hall (continued)**

Several parishioners, both in their survey responses, and in person, have suggested that a new fellowship hall is needed for St Jerome's. Last week, we touched on the limitations of St Joseph Hall, and how, in some ways, it no longer serves our parish adequately.

We think everyone would agree St Joseph's hall is in serious need of some work. The walls need to be painted. The ceiling tiles need to be replaced. The grid that holds up the ceiling tiles needs to be cleaned and painted (or replaced). Despite extensive work on the famous "grease trap", a sign hangs above the triple-sink in the kitchen, instructing users to "drain one sink at a time". As stated a few weeks ago, the moveable walls are over 30 years old. They no longer move as easily as they once did. And after 30-plus years, it's unlikely we could get new moveable panels exactly like those we have.

These efforts to remodel won't be easy or cheap. Some time ago, the Youth group began a project of painting the moveable walls. They completed less than half of the walls before they exceeded their budget. The narthex was remodeled a couple of years ago – walls repainted, ceiling tile replaced, grid painted, etc. That effort took several thousand dollars. St Joseph's hall is several times the size of the narthex. And even after all this work is complete, as discussed last week, St Joseph's hall no longer meets the Parish's needs.

The suggestion of several parishioners is that we construct a new fellowship hall – a hall on the same level as the main worship space. This new hall would accommodate the large parish functions that are forced to go elsewhere today. That new hall, on the same level as the worship space would eliminate the most pressing need for an elevator. People with physical limitations could move easily between the worship space and the fellowship hall. (An elevator would likely be mandated in any construction project, but it could be more effectively built in an addition.) The new hall could include a modern kitchen. The usable items from the existing kitchen could be moved to the new kitchen, leaving the plumbing limitations behind.

If St Jerome's were to build a new fellowship hall, what would become of the basement? Over the next several weeks, we'll share some of the ideas that other members of the Parish have suggested. For example, we can imagine the construction of permanent walls that would provide offices for the staff, a permanent room for the quilters, a permanent space for the Youth (or other Parish organizations) or permanent classrooms. Obviously, construction of permanent walls would work hand-in-glove with remodeling efforts. A re-purposing of St Joseph's hall would also necessitate a "phased" construction process. A new fellowship hall might be the gateway to the other enhancements that we're considering.

We appreciate your continued prayers.

St Jerome Build or Not Committee